

Programs make for faster response

Three new computer systems rolled out: CAD, CAIRS and ROSS

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CAL FIRE is leading the way into the twenty-first century with its new Command and Control automation programs. These programs are creating the foundation for CAL FIRE to build on for the next twenty years. CAL FIRE has officially launched three new programs: Alturas Computer Aided Dispatch system (CAD), the California All Incident Reporting System (CAIRS) and the Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS).

The Altaris CAD replaces Cal CAD which served CAL FIRE very well for many years. Altaris CAD is a Geographical Information System (GIS) based system which uses many inputs to determine the closest unit to send to an incident. This means that help gets there faster with less human interface. Some of the inputs it uses are: location, travel routes, special conditions, equipment type needed based on call type and more. The Altaris CAD program is one of the most complex CAD systems to have been installed in the world. The system is comprised of 22 independent sites, covering thousands of square miles with every kind of hazard type possible and they must be able to communicate with each other and ultimately feed into one universal database. Recently CAD to CAD was implemented, allowing CAL FIRE to put into practice a "no borders basic response plan," according to Deputy Chief Kevin Olson, program manager of Altaris CAD

and CAIRS. This is the first time in the United States that CAD to CAD has functioned successfully. The Altaris CAD is a very robust system, now that the basic system is working well, CAL FIRE can begin to use some of the enhancements such as mobile computing.

CAIRS is a data collection program that is able to collect information on all incidents. CAIRS is built on the National Fire Information Standard developed by The National Fire Information Council. By reporting in this format, CAL FIRE is able to meet all the current federal grant reporting requirements. California All Incident Reporting System is the replacement for EARS, Emergency Activity Reporting System. EARS is a DOS-based data reporting program that has been serving CAL FIRE since 1989 and will be shut down on January 31, 2007. One of the big

advantages of CAIRS is that it interfaces with the Altaris CAD program and pre-populates many of the fields, increasing accuracy and decreasing input time.

ROSS is a federally developed resources tracking system. All major fire events in the United States are tracked in ROSS; it also can be used for all risk events. In April of this year CAD and ROSS will begin to interface with each other to provide faster information sharing between the two programs. Forty percent of all requests placed in ROSS nationwide come from California.

The CAL FIRE Command and Control Automation programs provide the ability to get resources to incidents faster, to allocate resources for maximum efficiency, guide resources to incidents, and gather statistical data only limited by the imagination. CAL FIRE is paving the way in automation for agencies all over the country. For more information on all of these programs please see the CAL FIRE intranet site under IT Projects and Applications.



Above, Captain Mike Weber dispatches a new incident in Butte County.

Right, in the Sacramento Command Center Captain Lupe Ramirez fills requests in ROSS.

